

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 024884

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. ANGOLA

A. IZVESTIYA ON SOVIET POLICY

A JANUARY 29 "OBSERVER" ARTICLE IN IZVESTIYA, STRONGLY
ATTACKING US POLICY IN ANGOLA, ASSERTS THAT:

--THE USSR HAS NEVER OPPOSED THE QUEST FOR A POLITICAL
SOLUTION AND WOULD NOW WELCOME THE CONSOLIDATION OF
ALL "PATRIOTIC FORCES."

EMBASSY COMMENT: THIS IS THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT
OF SOVIET ANGOLA POLICY SINCE THE JANUARY 3 PRAVDA ARTICLE.
WE DETECT LITTLE, IF ANY, SOFTENING OF MOSCOW'S POSITION
HOWEVER, AND CONSIDER IT AS AN EFFORT TO PUT A MODERATELY
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CONCILIATORY FAÇADE ON AN ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED POLICY.

B. BENIN: LET THE MUNCHKINS MARCH

AT THE CLIMAX OF A MASS RALLY TO SHOW SUPPORT FOR TE MPLA
AND TO DENOUNCE THE US, BENIN'S PRESIDENT KEREKOU ANNOUNCED

PLANS TO DISPATCH AN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE OF VOLUNTEERS TO
FIGHT WITH THE MPLA IN ANGOLA. EMBASSY COTONOU REPORTS
THAT THE FORCE:

--WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY REGULAR ARMY OFFICERS;

--WILL NEED CONSIDERABLE LEADERSHIP AND PROTECTION
FROM THE CUBANS AND SOVIETS;

--MAY HAVE BEEN CREATED WITH THE THOUGHT THAT THE WAR
WILL BE OVER BEFORE THE BENINESE BECOME ENGAGED.

EMBASSY COMMENT: WE SUSPECT THE SOVIETS HAVE PULLED THE
WIRES FOR THIS MOVE, WHICH WILL BE A PROPAGANDA COUP AND
MIGHT STIMULATE SIMILAR GESTURES BY OTHER PRO-MPLA AFRICAN
GOVERNMENTS. (CONFIDENTIAL) MOSCOW 1360 AND COTONOU 155,
1/30.)

2. LEBANON: AMBITIONS SHOULD BE BUILT ON STERNER STUFF

ALTHOUGH THE COUNTRY REMAINS RELATIVELY CALM, EMBASSY
BEIRUT OBSERVES THAT THE JOCKEYING FOR POWER AND OFFICE
MAY BE PROCEEDING WITH TOO LITTLE REGARD FOR THE FRAGILITY
OF THE PRESENT CEASEFIRE.

--THE DELAY IN ANNOUNCING A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT,
MOSLEM QUESTIONING OF A CHRISTIAN PRESIDENCY, AND THE
SLIPPAGE OF THE FRANGIE VISIT TO SYRIA RAISE THE POS-
SIBILITY THAT THE ACCORD MAY UNRAVEL BEFORE IT IS
WOVEN. (CONFIDENTIAL) BEIRUT 994, 1/30.)

3. PORTUGAL: PROGRESS ON THE PACT BUT NOT BETWEEN THE
PARTIES

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EMBASSY LISBON REPORTS THAT PROSPECTS ARE GOOD FOR AN EARLY
CONCLUSION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE AFM-PARTIES PACT GIV-
EN THE FLEXIBILITY DEMONSTRATED BY REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL
NEGOTIATORS AND THE INTEREST OF THE PARTIES IN MOVING RAPID-
LY TOWARD EARLY ELECTIONS. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SOCIAL-
ISTS AND THE POPULAR DEMOCRATS ARE TROUBLED HOWEVER. THE
PROSPECT OF POST-ELECTORAL COOPERATION MAY EXERT SOME MOD-
ERATING INFLUENCE ON THE PS AND THE PPD, BUT THE CAMPAIGN,

ALREADY UNOFFICIALLY UNDERWAY, WILL CONTINUE TO STRAIN
RELATIONS BETWEEN THEM. (CONFIDENTIAL) LISBON 634, 1/30.)
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